



**2023 CONFERENCE ON LAND POLICY IN AFRICA (CLPA-2023)**  
**Concept Note**

1 November 2023



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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfDB	African Development Bank
ALPC	African Land Policy Centre
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CLPA	Conference on Land Policy in Africa
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
F&G	Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa
LPI	Land Policy Initiative
SC	Scientific Committee

## **1 BACKGROUND**

Inclusive land governance is critical to achieving the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, particularly goals related to quality of life and well-being, agriculture, environment, peace and security, and gender equality. Similarly, achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is underpinned by inclusive land governance, especially goals related to eliminating poverty; ending hunger and promoting sustainable agriculture; equality, gender equality and women empowerment and inclusive economic growth; productive employment; human settlements, and peaceful and inclusive societies.

The Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods specifies land tenure as one of the commitment areas in agriculture, while recognizing that this is “not (completely) under the mandate of the Ministry of Agriculture.” It further highlights that good land policies and management are key to achieving agricultural transformation with equitable access to land and secure land rights being critical to investment and sustainable land management. The key performance targets and indicators for monitoring and reporting on the Malabo Declaration for Agriculture include land governance related targets and indicators. In this regard, the recommendation is that 100% of farm households have ownership or secure land rights by 2025.

The Land Policy Initiative (LPI) was established in March 2006, as a tripartite consortium of the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and African Development Bank (AfDB). In 2017, LPI was transformed into the African Land Policy Centre (ALPC) by the 2nd AU Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment. During the initial phase of its establishment (2006- 2009), the LPI supported the AU Commission and led the development of the African Union Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa and the Framework and Guidelines on the Land Policy in Africa (F&G) which was endorsed the African Union Heads of State and Government as the AU Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in 2009.

Through the Declaration, Heads of State and Government resolved to take ownership of and lead land reform processes by strengthening institutions for effective land governance and allocating adequate budgetary resources for policy development, implementation and tracking of progress. They also resolved to ensure equitable land access for all land users and improve access and security of land tenure for women, as key priorities. Following the endorsement of these important instruments, several African Union Member States have been undertaking land reform to improve their land administration systems and promote land tenure security.

## **1.1 The Conference on Land Policy in Africa**

The Conference on Land Policy in Africa (CLPA) has proved to be a major policy dialogue, information sharing and learning event, thereby contributing to the implementation of the AU Agenda on Land. The overall goal of the CLPA is to deepen capacity for land policy development, implementation and monitoring with a specific focus on emerging issues and AU commitments in the land sector through: i) improved access to knowledge and information in support of evidence-based land policy making; ii) showcasing promising practices in the field of land policy and governance and; iii) facilitating networking amongst land actors in Africa. In this regard, the Conference brings together participants drawn from academia and research, government, traditional authorities, civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector, parliamentarians, and development partners with the aim of disseminating knowledge to promote dialogue, networking, advocacy, and partnerships in support of the implementation of the AU Land Agenda in particular evidence-based land policy development, review, implementation, and monitoring. The continental land conference meets the needs of African policymakers and stakeholders, and complements existing global and national initiatives.

The Conference is designed to also capture a broad range of land-related local knowledge and know-how, and generate interest from CSOs, women's organizations, farmers' organizations, traditional leaders, and the private sector. The Conference has a catalytic effect on land policy development, implementation and monitoring in Africa through creating space for presenting and publishing research findings on land policy and governance and drawing the attention of a wide range of stakeholders and partners on current and emerging land issues and challenges that need specific attention in order to achieve the objectives of the Agenda 2063.

The Conference adopts a scientific approach through establishing a Scientific Committee (SC), involving researchers and academia from across the continent and abroad. The purpose of the Scientific Committee is to deliberate on and to guide the substance and focus of discussions and planning in preparation for and during the proceedings of the conference. The SC functions as an advisory to the Joint Working Group on Land and the ALPC.

Selected papers from the Conference are peer-reviewed and published in a special issue of the *Journal of African Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences*.

## **1.2 Objectives and Expected Outcomes of the CLPA**

### **1.2.1 Overall Objective**

The overall objective of the Conference is to deepen commitment and strengthen capacity for land policy development, implementation and monitoring in Africa through improved access to knowledge and information in support of evidence-based land policymaking.

### **1.2.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the Conference are to:

- i. Share and exchange knowledge and best practices on issues related to land tenure security, especially for women and vulnerable groups in customary jurisdictions; options/modalities for transparent, accountable and sustainable land-based management and investments; addressing land-related conflicts; among others; enhancing capacity development for land governance etc;
- ii. Showcase information, communication and land administration technologies and innovations to enhance land governance and administration; Provide a platform for networking among researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders with a view to improving the quality and quantity of research to address African specificities and emerging issues in land governance;
- iii. Provide a space for informed policy dialogue among stakeholders on policy options to enhance land governance, strengthen access to land by all land users and recognize the customary based land rights of African communities; and
- iv. Provide an opportunity for advocacy and resource mobilization in support of national and regional land policy initiatives geared towards enhanced land governance in Africa.

### **1.3 Expected Outcomes and Outputs**

- i. Improved knowledge in support of evidence-based land policy development, implementation and monitoring in Africa;
- ii. Enhanced and deepened consensus amongst African policymakers and stakeholders on promising avenues for addressing land governance challenges; and,
- iii. Improved networking, partnerships and resources for inclusive land governance and land policy in Africa.

Key outputs of the CLPA include conference papers, documentation of progress in land policy in Africa, web articles, conference report, press releases, conference proceedings and a special issue of the “Journal of African Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences.

## **2 THE 2023 CONFERENCE ON LAND POLICY IN AFRICA**

The inaugural Conference on Land Policy in Africa took place in November 2014 under the theme “*The Next Decade of Land Policy in Africa: Ensuring Agricultural Development and Inclusive Growth*,” attracting 342 participants (30% women). This was followed by the second Conference held in November 2017, under the theme “*The Africa We Want: Achieving Socioeconomic Transformation through Inclusive and Equitable Access to Land by the Youth*”. The Conference brought together 445 participants from 49 countries and featured ninety-five (95) scientific paper presentations, in addition to Master Classes, policy dialogues, and side events. The third edition of the conference was held in November 2019 under the theme “*Winning the Fight against Corruption in the Land Sector: Sustainable Pathways for Africa’s Transformation*” and witnessed the participation of around 550 participants with over 100 papers presented. The fourth edition of the CLPA that was held in November 2021 in a hybrid format under the theme “*Land Governance for Safeguarding Art, Culture and Heritage towards the Africa We Want*”. The Conference Theme is usually developed in alignment with the AU Theme for that year.

From November 21 to 24, 2023 the tripartite consortium consisting of the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) will be holding the Fifth Conference on Land Policy in Africa (CLPA) in the context of the ‘*Year of AfCFTA: Acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area Implementation*’, which is the AU Theme of the year.

### **2.1 The 2023 Conference Theme**

The adoption as theme of the year is expected to generate greater political commitment and accelerate the effective implementation of the AfCFTA to fully benefit the African citizenry and achieve the aspirations and goals of Agenda 2063. The yearlong activities will enhance the existing collaboration among the Member States, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), AU institutions, the private sector, development partners, and other stakeholders, to mobilize and implement actions that boost intra-Africa trade, particularly trade in value-added production and trade across all sectors of Africa’s economy. Land is one of the key resources and enablers in the implementation of the AfCFTA and produces a significant percentage of the agricultural commodities that are envisioned to be traded. It is also a source of Africa’s mineral wealth and other commodities. In addition, manufacturing processes take place on land.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Session of the African Union Summit held in Kigali, Rwanda, in March 2018 adopted the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA which came into force in

May 2019. The AfCFTA aims to create an integrated continental market for goods and services. Beyond the policy transformation and reforms such as the gradual elimination of tariffs on 90 percent of goods, and the reduction of barriers to trade in services aimed at increasing Africa's income, the AfCFTA seeks to ensure inclusivity of women and youth, including those living in the rural areas, development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and enhancing industrialization of the Continent. The AfCFTA is accompanied by an Investment Protocol which seeks to promote and protect intra-Africa investments while ensuring sustainable economic development. The Investment Protocol creates common investment areas, allowing investors to be trans-boundary, improve tourism and enhance agricultural production. Achieving these AfCFTA' objectives can happen upon land governance processes that equally secure land tenure rights to enhance economic development while safeguarding the environment.

The creation of a single market under the AfCFTA provides opportunities for both economic growth and the creation of new as well as innovative networks for those operating in sectors such as mining, manufacturing, services, or agriculture and agro-processing. Its implementation has started to generate positive implications for intra-Africa trade towards economic integration through customs management, transport facilitation, trade and project finance, and institutional development. However, productivity, that takes place on land, has remained low across several sectors, including agriculture, resulting in low job creation for the youth and increased inequalities among women and men.

The issue of inclusive land governance therefore becomes critical for the achievement of the AfCFTA. In addition, despite having several opportunities offered by the AfCFTA, there are existing barriers to entry and constraints that limit the participation of women, youth, pastoralists, and other vulnerable groups who are operating in the informal and formal sectors. They also experience challenges with access to land, insecurity of land tenure and land use that can inhibit the successful attainment of the AfCFTA. Moreover, to promote fully functioning land market, land oriented services and professions, including surveyors, real estate property valuers among other land administrators, would require free movement and cross border mutual recognition of certifications and the unlocking of land assets.

In line with the 2023 AU theme of the year, the theme for the 2023 Conference on Land Policy in Africa is **Promoting Sustainable Land Governance in Africa for Accelerated Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area**



### **Core sub-themes:**

1. Best practices in developing responsive, responsible land policies for improved cross-border trade in Africa
2. Inclusive and transparent land governance practices and building effective land administration institutions
3. Monitoring and evaluation of land governance

***Cross - cutting: Youth, Indigenous people, gender, water, climate change, food, cross-border trade***

### **Sub-Themes**

- Inclusive land governance for enhanced intra- Africa trade, food security and sustainable food systems
- Regional integration, migration, intra-Africa trade and land use and sustainability
- Innovative geospatial data, and digitalization technologies, including block chain, for land administration and trade in Africa
- Implementation of the AfCFTA: Breaking investment and trade - land related barriers for inclusion of African women, pastoralists and youth
- Best practices in documenting customary and statutory land access, control and ownership in Africa
- Spatial planning, infrastructure, and transport planning for improved trade in Africa
- The confluence of the environment, (including climate change) agriculture and cross-border trade in the context of AfCFTA.

The ALPC leads in the organization of the Conference on Land Policy in Africa with guidance and support from the AUC, ECA and AfDB, in close collaboration with its key partners including inter-governmental organizations, government agencies, academia, regional economic communities, and African centres of excellence, CSOs, African private sector associations and development partners.

### **2.2 Dates and Venue**

The CLPA is usually held in November every two years. The forthcoming edition of the Conference on Land Policy in Africa will take place from **21 to 24 November 2023 at AU Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.**

### **2.3 Conference Format**

The Conference theme and sub-themes will be the focus of discussions in key plenary and parallel sessions. To ensure alignment of Conference contributions to the identified

and selected themes, a Call for Abstracts is sent out as the basis for selecting paper contributions as well as selection of Master classes, side events, exhibitions, and other related events. This is carried out by the Scientific Committee which guides the scientific content and focus of the Conference. The Committee is comprised of experts on land policy, land administration, gender and development in Africa. They represent academia, from Africa and abroad, UN and non-UN organizations intensively involved in enhancing land governance in Africa, and relevant CSOs.

So far, the conference has been physical or hybrid meeting of presenters, speakers and participants for at least a week, albeit with pre-events. The conference features thematic-focused, panel-based plenary sessions and parallel sessions in correspondence to selected sub-themes. A typical conference day includes one plenary session and two rounds of 4 breakout sessions, over 4hrs 30 minutes with a lunch break offered in between.

Widely considered as Africa's premier platform for land governance, the conference attracts enormous side events. For example, the CLPA-2019 witnessed the organization of fifty side events. The side events could range from technically-oriented meetings, master classes and launches, undertaken for 90 to 120 minutes each. Side events are typically organized before and after the second daily technical sessions. Interpretation services are provided for main conference sessions. Side events and master classes should also provide interpretation services for a wider reach.

The 2023 conference will take a hybrid format. This implies that the conference will be held physically as well as virtually, i.e. a video conference platform powered by the services of a reliable video conferencing tool such as Cisco WebEx, Microsoft Teams<sup>1</sup> etc.

## **2.4 Contact**

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<sup>1</sup>These platforms are widely considered as the best providers of e-calls/webinars services currently available considering stability, security, and, more importantly, quality streaming under low internet bandwidth.